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ABSTRACT

Cross-cultural communication cannot be achieved if students are only presented with cultural facts. Instruction must involve the affective and cognitive processes of the learner in interpreting these facts. Before students can understand the attitudes and values of a foreign culture, they must be aware of their own attitudes and values in interpreting foreign events. The paper discusses the design of classroom exercises and activities to clarify the attitudes and values underlying cultural facts. The bridges for understanding other cultures do not exist at the level of one's personal constructs of those events. The teacher's task is to make these constructs apparent and observable to students without putting them on the defensive or reinforcing stereotypes. One method for accomplishing this is through the use of a repertory grid which shows how different people from different cultures construe the same events differently. Classroom exercises for establishing a common ground of shared experiences aim at construing the experiences of another person together with one's own. (JK)

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CULTURE AND CONSTRUCTS : COMMUNICATING ATTITUDES AND VALUES IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM.

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Claire J. Kramsch

As foreign language pedagogy is rapidly changing to meet the needs of communication and interaction, it is urgent that we re-evaluate the ways in which culture is taught in the classroom. In the last ten years much has been done to provide teachers and textbooks with culturally authentic material. The methodology, however, is lagging behind. In language teaching we have come away from rote learning and imitation drills, i.e. from a stimulus-response approach, and yet we still use mostly stimulus-response methods of presenting culture. Students are "exposed to" or "acquainted with" another culture only passively, on a tourist level so to speak, while retaining their American perspective. This paper suggests that cross-cultural communication, or, to use a European term, "transnational communicative competence", cannot be achieved if we only present the students with the cultural facts; we have to involve the affective and cognitive processes of the learner in interpreting these facts. This paper will thus be primarily concerned with method rather than with content.

The work of the Ohio State University psychologist George A. Kelly can serve here as a useful theoretical framework to design exercises and activities in the classroom that clarify the attitudes and values underlying cultural facts. Kelly's major work, published in 1955, The Psychology of Personal Constructs - A Theory of Personality, had an immediate impact on educational approaches of learning in Britain. In this country, however, his work remained virtually unknown until recently, overshadowed in the 60's and early 70's

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by the humanistic philosophies of Maslow, Rogers, Fromm and others. Since 1976, when his work was mentioned at the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, Kelly's theory of personal constructs seems to be belatedly coming into its own in American psychological thought. As recent advances in language learning theory stress the negotiative aspects of meaning and communication, and the predicting processes that go on in the foreign language learner, Kelly's theory, based on principles of cognitive psychology, is more relevant than ever for the teaching of culture in language classes.

I will shortly summarize the theory and illustrate its major points as they apply to our purposes.

Kelly's fundamental postulate states: "A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which (s)he anticipates events." - "A person's processes": each one of us looks at his/her world, i.e., his own and other people's cultures, through patterns of interpretation or "personal constructs", which he creates and then attempts to fit over the realities. These patterns are not fixed once and for all, they are constantly subject to revision or replacement. - "Psychologically channelized": a person's thinking is not completely fluid, it is channelized. It follows the channels the person has laid out for him/herself, and only by recombining old channels can one create new ones. These channels structure a person's thinking and limit his/her access to the ideas and culture of others. - "Anticipating events": the patterns of interpretation or "constructs" which we use are intended to help us anticipate and predict another person's behavior and reactions and thus make sense of the world around us. This is incidentally the raison d'être and the usefulness of stereotypes.

This main postulate has a series of corollaries which fall into three categories: 1) construction of experience; 2)organization of constructs: 3) interpersonal or cross-cultural understanding.

1. Construction of Experience

Before we can make students understand the attitudes and values of a foreign culture, we have to make them aware of their own attitudes and values in interpreting foreign events. Cultural facts such as: "in Spain bullfights are a favorite sport",or "Germans close their office doors", or "French higher education is free" - these facts raise their curiosity, but cannot help them make sense out of Spanish, German or French reality or understand the way natives of these countries think and react. According to Kelly, bridges for understanding do not exist at the level of events, only at the level of our personal constructs of those events. Our task as teachers is to make these constructs apparent and observable to students in the classroom, without putting the students on the defensive or re-inforcing stereotypes.

One of the methods suggested by Kelly is the repertory grid, which can be used as a psychic mirror of cultural attitudes and values. A repertory grid is a tool used by psychologists to determine the ways in which a person interprets a series of events in his/her environment. It is based on the following theoretical postulate: in construing, i.e., interpreting facts, a person notes features in a series of elements which characterize some of the elements and are particularly uncharacteristic of others. Constructs emerge out of similarities and contrasts - they are always dichotomous in nature. A fact is similar to another always with respect to and by contrast with a third. For example, two things are white by contrast with a third non-white thing. This third thing need not be black, it might be red or blue, or off-white. The third element is generally unexpressed; it is usually implicit or tacit knowledge, because it is built on intuition or on deep personal or cultural attitudes rather than on a concept. But it can yield a concept if we explore it.

For example, two 17 year-olds were asked to construe the concept "bigot" by contrasting it with another concept. From contrast to contrast, both students construed this concept along two different axes of thinking:

Student 1		Student 2	
bigot	vs. liberal	bigot	vs. open-minded
liberal	vs. conservative	open-minded	vs. prejudiced
conservative	vs. leftist	prejudiced	vs. enlightened
leftist	vs. military	enlightened	vs. ignorant

Unconsciously using the contrasting semantic network of each element, student 1 clearly construed this particular concept according to political axes, whereas student 2 construed that same concept along personal axes. We may not conclude that student 1 is in general more politically-minded than student 2, and indeed this was not the case. But we may observe that at that particular moment, in that particular circumstance, student 1 unconsciously chose political rather than personal channels of thought.

In a foreign culture, we construe events by contrast and analogy with our own culture as well as by contrast and analogy with other events in that culture. The following grid was used in foreign language classes at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to show students how different people from different cultures construe differently the same events. It consists of a repertory of ten American figures familiar to both Americans and foreigners. American figures were chosen rather than figures or events taken from the foreign culture, as they offered a known point of reference for a preliminary exploration of American values and an eventual cross-cultural analysis. This repertory grid was given to ten American graduate students of engineering in French

and German classes, and ten engineering students who had just come over from France and Germany. It was therefore a rather homogeneous group in age, educational background and professional interests. Each student was to fill the grid in his/her native language according to the instructions given in each language. Here were the instructions for the English-speaking students :

> It is much easier to see culture as a factor in the lives of persons from another culture than it is to see it in our own lives. Using analogy and contrast, construct your own cultural value system.
>
> Here are ten persons familiar to the American scene:
> 1. a foreigner
> 2. a business person
> 3. a black person
> 4. a congressman
> 5. an army officer
> 6. a baseball player
> 7. a teacher
> 8. a TV star
> 9. a civil rights fighter
> 10. a cowboy
>
> Arrange them in groups of three (1,2,3; 2,3,4; 3,4,5 etc.) For each group answer the question: What is an important way in which two of these are alike but different from the third ?
>
> In the grid on the back of this sheet, put a cross in the column of the two similar persons (X) , a circle in the column of the contrasting person (O) . Write your reason for the analogy between the first two in the column "constructs", and your reason for the difference with the third person in the column "contrasts". Take time to think and to choose a construct and a contrast among the many that come to mind. Note that a contrast is not automatically the contrary of a construct. It may be a different element (e.g., the contrast of "private" need not be "not private", it may be "public" or "professional" etc.)
>
> Go down the line and find which persons share the characteristic you chose for the first two. Write a check mark in their column (✓).
>
> Proceed similarly in a sequential manner. There are no true or false answers and repetitions are likely to occur.

A sample of the French and the German instructions are given in Appendix 1. Here are some of the responses given by the American students :

	1. foreigner	2. business person	3. black person	4. congressman	5. army officer	6. baseball player	7. teacher	8. TV star	9. civil rights fighter	10. cowboy	constructs	contrasts
1, 2, 3	X	O	X								strong ethnic/cultural ties	association with community and business group, but no cult. ties
2, 3, 4												
3, 4, 5		✓	X	O	X		✓				believe that government should provide them with more money	believe that government money should be matched
4, 5, 6				X	X	O					depend on each other for their jobs	depend on public willingness to pay for jobs
5, 6, 7												
6, 7, 8												
7, 8, 9				✓			X	O	X		trying to improve the world, ideas and ideals, moral commitment	mindless glamour, empty words entertainer
8, 9, 10						✓		X	O	X	"romanticized career"	"moral career"
9, 10, 1												
10, 1, 2				✓								

The results were tabulated longitudinally and vertically (see Tables 1 and 2).

2. Organizing Constructs

A person not only construes events but establishes ordinal relationships between constructs. This is done for greater convenience in anticipating events. For example, a low-level construct such as "friendly" vs. "hostile" explains fewer events in the American culture than a construct with a higher level of abstraction, such as "community-minded" vs. "self-centered". The 17 year-olds mentioned earlier were anxious to find similarities and differences in their ways of thinking and were fascinated at seeing them so clearly mirrored, but they were equally interested in abstracting the higher-level concepts "political" vs. "personal" to interpret their divergent constructions of the same event. They also offered spontaneously one superordinate construct as a bridge between the two systems:"We are both dealing with the value of a person", student 1 exclaimed, "you along personal lines, me along political lines." Their excitement was not only due to the novelty of their discovery but to the greater convenience offered by the higher-level construct for their mutual understanding. They were also visibly relieved to see that the exercise did not involve any right or wrong, good or bad judgment on themselves and their values.

Similarly, foreign language students can be helped to organize and abstract their cultural constructs in a non-threatening atmosphere. Returning to the repertory grid, one figure was selected, e.g., the teacher , for cross-cultural analysis. Since the French and the German students construed American reality according to their own cultural axes of thinking - as was to be expected - it was easy to make inferences as to the attitudes and values of these students with regard to teachers and education.

Using analogy and contrast, the constructs within each culture

were first classified according to the following categories: formation, living conditions, concerns, social image, personal image, role in society. These categories were meant to facilitate a contrastive analysis and were open to discussion (see Table 2). The group then discussed which superordinate constructs could yield the higher level of abstraction necessary to build bridges between the three cultures . The following three constructs were suggested: accent on interpersonal, accent on moral, accent on social education. Since this discussion took place in the foreign language, the teacher helped by offering several formulations and by pointing out the difficulty of separating the language from its cultural context. A common construct emerged from this discussion: the three perspectives on the figure of the teacher were really three different ways of viewing education. At that level, it was easier for the American student to understand and even espouse a French or a German view of teachers because the higher abstraction arrived at, role of education, included both the American and the French/German construct, thus serving as a natural bridge from one culture to the other.

The higher level of organization of constructs has the advantage, not only of reducing the threat of foreign values, but also of having what Kelly calls a larger "range of convenience" , i.e., it can accomodate more events than the original itemized list of individual constructs. It makes it easier for a student to predict and anticipate the reactions and behaviors of a French or a German in a given situation. The superordinate construct "education of the person" vs. "education of the citizen" is more permeable, i.e., more likely to admit new ideas about the common construct education. It serves as a cross-cultural bridge.

The same low-level and high-level organization can be done

in groups or with the whole class using the longitudinal tabulation of the same grid (see Table 1). One such discussion was conducted in German with undergraduates in their third semester of German at M.I.T, as an introduction to a cross-cultural project and the reading of excerpts by Peter Bichsel, McIver Weatherford and Ludwig Moos.[1] Interesting parallels could be drawn with regard to the concept of freedom in the three groups (American group: in government vs. private individual; French group: dépendant de la sanction du public vs. indépendant de la sanction du public; German group: Unterordnung vs. geistige Tätigkeit.) Similarly, the concept of good citizenship translated differently in the three groups (American group: commitment to others vs. personal grandisment; French group: travail/démocratie vs. arrivisme; German group: Engagement für Probleme der Wirklichkeit vs. eigenes Interesse.)

3. Cross-Cultural Understanding

As Kelly points out, persons differ from one another in their construction of events, i.e., in the different approaches they take to the anticipation of the same event. For example, a French and an American differ not because they have different school systems, but because they view education differently. A common ground can be found, experience can be shared, by construing the experiences of the other person together with one's own. This can be done in the classroom by exercises such as those suggested in Appendix 2. The following example for exercise 3.1 shows how constructs can be brainstormed in the classroom, after the reading of a text or a dialogue, as early as the elementary levels of language teaching.

As shown in Table 3, the teacher writes on the board the cultural information given in the reading: open doors in the US are a sign of friendliness, closed doors in Germany mean "Ordnung, Ordentlichkeit". If these concepts were not further discussed, Amer-

ican students would be likely to contrast in their minds American friendliness and trust with German order and discipline. They would see in the latter the stereotypical negative image of German unfriendliness and rigidity. By exploring both concepts as seen from each culture's perspective, two unexpected constructs emerge. This can easily be done in the foreign language. The American construct is brainstormed with the whole class and its range of convenience explored. The teacher, then, on the basis of his/her experience in Germany and with Germans, or of readings, suggests the series of constructs for the German concept "order". This can also be done by the students themselves if they have the opportunity to interview a native German. The series of constructs offered in Table 1 are the result of one such interview. The range of convenience of the German construct is then brainstormed with the students on the basis of their prior knowledge gained through textbooks and other information available, and supplemented by the teacher. A higher level of abstraction is arrived at through group discussion with guidance from the teacher. Various suggestions are acceptable, leading to a broader understanding of American and German realities.

A similar approach could be taken to construe the concept "friendliness" or the concept "order" in both American and German cultures.

The approach outlined above for the teaching of culture is intended to make the students' attitudes and values in interpreting foreign facts and events observable in a non-threatening atmosphere. By having them construct their own learning, so to speak, the teacher can help them build bridges between their own and the foreign culture. This process offers them a new set of dimensions with which they can construe the world around them. Real

cultural understanding is precisely this ability to step in someone else's shoes or, as Kelly calls it, "rotate the axes of one's thinking" without losing one's own cultural identity.

The psychological aspect of this approach makes it particularly suited as a starting point to teach culture to American students, but it does not preclude other, more sociological or historical, approaches for the construction of foreign events. Such constructions may be profitably encouraged and used once the psychological bridges for understanding have been established.

The use of this method in the classroom raises some new questions concerning the role of the teacher and the type of learning that students are engaged in. In the same manner as the teacher, anxious to teach language for communication, has to broaden his/her knowledge of the language to include not only its grammatical structures but also its patterns of usage - teaching culture for communication requires from the teacher not only a knowledge of cultural facts, but a familiarity with the way native speakers think and react. Such familiarity can only be gained by an increased awareness of one's own attitudes and values and the enlightened contact with the people, the literature, and all other aspects of the foreign culture.

As the emphasis is less on factual knowledge and more on the process of thinking and the construction of meaning, the danger of creating new, avowed stereotypes in an effort to eliminate unavowed prejudices should not ignored. This danger is present whenever one personal construct, isolated for observation time and space, is used as a general truth and taught as such. The informed teacher will be aware of this danger and remind the students of the individual, regional, social differences inherent in those personal processes as well as of their changes over time.

Notes:

1 Peter Bichsel "Des Schweizers Schweiz", Tintenfisch 1, Jahrbuch für Literatur. Hrsg. Michael Krüger und Klaus Wagenbach. Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 1968, 55-59 ; Jack McIver Weatherford "Deutsche Kultur, amerikanisch betrachtet", Tintenfisch 15, Thema: Deutschland, das Kind mit den zwei Köpfen. Hrsg. H.C.Buch. Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach 1978, 82-94 ; Ludwig Moos hrsg. Anders reisen USA. Ein Reisebuch in den Alltag .Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1981.

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TABLE 1 : LONGITUDINAL TABULATION OF CONSTRUCTS

	American students	French students	German students
1. living conditions	urban vs. rural overpaid vs. underpaid	homme de papiers vs.plein air rémunérateur vs. non rémunérateur	
2. public image	muscular,physical vs. mental activity celebrity vs.unknown	intellectuel vs. manuel loisir vs. travail "la frime" vs.occup.sérieuse détente/jeu vs. analyse exhibitionniste vs. sérieux	Glamour vs. Intellektuelle Schein vs. Wirklichkeit Sportler vs. ernsthafte Tätigkeit (Staatsdiener)
3. place in society	financial vs.political power leader vs.indiv.effort in govt. vs. private individual(free agent) receives gvt.aid vs. public aid public services vs.small segment of population part of a well-designed team vs. individual	exploiteur vs. exploité soumission à la hiérarchie vs. jeu (risques/profits) dépendant du public vs. indépendant de la sanction du p.	ökonomischer vs. sozialer Sektor Gruppendisziplin vs. Individualismus Unterordnung vs. geistige Tätigkeit Oberschicht vs.Mittel/Unterschicht
4. role in society	defense vs. civilian commitment to others vs. personal grandisment promotes ideas/ideals vs. useless glamour and empty words community involvement vs. loner has power vs. has no power	avenir ouvert vs. avenir fermé "réussir" vs. ne pas réussir pouvoir culturel vs. argent travail/démocratie vs.arrivisme convaincre vs. séduire	technische Lösungen vs. politisch-diplomatische eigenes Interesse vs. Engagement für Probleme der Wirklichkeit Teil der schönen heilen Welt vs. bringt Bewegung/stört American dream vs. Zerstörer desselben, Kritikfähigkeit Mythos vs. Wirklichkeit erzieherische Funktion
5. personal characteristics	formal education vs. not educated	"con" vs. intelligent	
Possible superordinate construct:	accent on sphere of influence	accent on the individual	accent on social reality

TABLE 2 : VERTICAL TABULATION OF CONSTRUCTS
ex. teacher/professeur/Lehrer

	American students	French students	German students
1. formation	formal education		Universitätsausbildung
2. living conditions	underpaid often involved in conflicts city dweller	ne gagne pas assez	relativ niedriges Einkommen sozial niedriger Stand Mittelschicht/bürgerlich
3. concerns	wants more money from govt wants to be referred to as professional	utopie avenir fermé	Idealist politisch-sozial in der Realität
4. social image	no celebrity, no attention (except when on strike) no glamour; not part of a well-defined team respected; what children want to become when they grow up	anonyme intellectuel homme d'idées, débat, réflexion soumission à la hiérarchie respectabilité et autorité indépendantes de la performance et du public	der breiten Öffentlichkeit unbekannt Intellektueller geistige Aktivität Staatsdiener/Dienstuender (abhängig)
5. personal image		analyse;sérieux (vs.jeu) travail, responsabilité respect du travail, de la démocratie détenteur d'une vérité a de la moralité, sens de l'honnêteté, de la justice pas interessé par l'argent	
6. role in society	leader strong community involvement commitment to others educator trying to improve world work to improve society	pouvoir culturel (forme et déforme les futurs dirigeants de la nation) perpétue l'ordre établi convainc (vs. séduit) remet en question essaie d'imposer un idéal	wichtige erzieherische Funktion Training in Disziplin/Tätigkeit soll um Gerechtigkeit bemüht sein bringt Bewegung ins System stört die schöne heile Welt zeigt auf soziale MiBstände keine Unterordnung; Individualismus
possible superordinate construct	accent on personal education	accent on moral education	accent on social education

common construct : r o l e o f e d u c a t i o n

TABLE 3

3.1 Exercise in dichotomous thinking

The cultural event is taken from Moeller/Liedloff Deutsch Heute, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979 Chapter VIII.

I. Construction of Experience

	United States	Germany
cultural event:	OPEN DOORS	CLOSED DOORS
meaning (value):	friendliness	order
constructs : (what does this value mean to you ? to a German ?)	friendly vs. don't like you	order vs. disorganized
	trust you vs. exclude you	in control vs. chaotic
	sociable vs. conceited	structured vs. amateur
	helpful vs. bossy	professional vs. not serious
range of convenience : (what other examples of this American value ? of this German value ?)	no hedges	hedges and fences
	glass doors	full doors
	smile	handshake
	informal parties	role of hostess at parties
	"call me Bill"	"Sie","Frau Doktor","Herr X"
	"dear friend"	"Sehr geehrter Herr"
superordinate construct : (what do all these examples have in common ?)	open to all / public vs. private	official / professional vs. private
common aspect : (where is the emphasis in both cases ?)	person in community	individual in society

II. "Rotating the Axes"

new set of dimensions for the American student to use when construing his/her own and the foreign culture :

societal self	vs.	personal self

APPENDIX 1

Personal Constructs Grid

Instructions for the French students :

L'enquête suivante fait partie d'une étude expérimentale que nous conduisons dans le cadre de nos cours de langue sur la manière dont étudiants américains et étrangers se représentent les Etats-Unis.
Voici une liste de dix personnages de la scène américaine:

1. un étranger
2. un homme d'affaires
3. un noir
4. un député au Congrès
5. un officier
6. un joueur de baseball
7. un professeur
8. une vedette de cinéma
9. un défenseur des droits civiques
10. un cowboy

Sur la grille située au verso, vous trouverez ces personnages en groupes de trois. Trouvez pour chaque groupe la caractéristique que deux des personnages ont en commun, ainsi que le contraste qu'ils forment avec le troisième.

1. Mettez une croix dans chacune des cases des deux pôles analogues (X) , un cercle dans le pôle contrastif (O).

2. Indiquez dans la première colonne de droite les raisons de l'analogie, dans l'autre colonne les raisons du contraste.

3. Cochez les autres personnages partageant la même caractéristique que les deux pôles analogues (✓).

Procédez de la même manière pour chaque groupe de trois, jusqu'à ce que la grille soit remplie .

Instructions for the German students :

Dies ist Teil einer experimentellen Studie über kulturelle Vorstellungen und Unterschiede. Gleichgültig wie lange Sie schon in den USA sind, würde es uns interessieren zu erfahren, welche Vorstellungen Sie als Ausländer von diesem Land haben.

Hier ist eine Liste von zehn Figuren aus der amerikanischen Szene :

1. ein Ausländer
2. ein Geschäftsmann
3. ein Schwarzer
4. ein Congressman
5. ein Offizier
6. ein Baseballspieler
7. ein Lehrer
8. ein Filmstar
9. ein Bürgerrechtler
10. ein Cowboy

Umseitig finden Sie einen Raster, wo diese Figuren in Dreiergruppen angeordnet sind. Für jede Dreiergruppe stellen Sie sich bitte zwei Fragen: Welche zwei Figuren haben welches

Merkmal gemeinsam ? In welchem Kontrast stehen sie zur dritten Figur ?

1. Setzen Sie ein Kreuz bei den zwei Figuren des analogen Pols (X) , einen Kreis bei dem kontrastierenden Pol (O).

2. Schreiben Sie kurz Ihre Begründung für Analogien bzw. Kontraste in der entsprechenden rechten Spalte.

3. Suchen Sie welche anderen Figuren dasselbe Merkmal aufweisen, das Sie den zwei analogen Figuren zugeschrieben haben. Schreiben Sie einen Haken (✓) in den jeweiligen Kasten.

Wiederholen Sie bitte diese drei Schritte für jede im Raster links angeführte Dreiergruppe.

APPENDIX 2

Three-step cultural exercises: construction of values; organization of constructs; building bridges.

1. Personal Constructs

Sensitization exercise. Students construe in the foreign language the following characteristics, as they are relevant to values and attitudes found in the readings, dialogues and other classroom activities. "Take time to think and choose the construct that appeals to you most among the many possibilities."

- a loud person
- private
- successful
- free
- respectful

Using a series of contrasts, build 4 or 5 constructs. Then compare your list with that of other students. List on board. Find a superordinate construct that summarizes your line of thought. Find a bridge to the lines of thought of the other students in the class.

2. Repertory Grids

2.1 Each student fills out a grid in English on features of the American culture. Teacher collects grids from native speakers(filled out in the foreign language). In class, using the foreign language, identify with the students the longitudinal axes and/or one vertical axis of thinking of the students. List on board.

Identify the axes of thinking of the foreign students. List on board.

Using analogy and contrast, abstract superordinate categories within each culture.

Abstract one or two aspects common to both cultures (bridge).

2.2 Give names to the figures on the grid and brainstorm reactions

from the American students and possible reactions from the native speakers. For example: cowboy on Marlboro ad, Martin Luther King, John Travolta etc.

2.3 A foreign visitor to this country sees a picture of a cowboy, of a teacher in an American school or of a baseball player in the field. Write the dialogue that might ensue between this person and you, his/her American friend. Take into account what you know about your own attitudes and those of the foreign visitor.

3. Brainstorming and Group Construction

3.1 Dichotomous thinking. Use analogy and synonyms, contrast and antonyms to construe one specific cultural feature, e.g., closed vs. open doors, different school systems, bullfights, as it occurs in the readings, dialogues of the textbook. List constructs on board. Brainstorm the range of convenience of these constructs (what other events do they help understand or apply to ?)
Using analogy and contrast, abstract superordinate categories with the American and the foreign lists of constructs and events. Find one or two constructs that are common to both cultures (bridge).

3.2 Debates. Taking into account what they now know about their own and the foreigner's constructs, students take the foreigner's part and the American part in debates. Topics might be: religion (should religion be taught in the public schools like in Germany ?) or school systems (foreign and American experts plan a new school system for a bicultural community: structure ? curriculum ? schedules ?)

3.3 Role-play. Describe your school and your daily routine to a foreigner. What points will you emphasize, knowing what you know about the foreigner's school system ?

3.4 You are an American salesman in Germany. Knowing what you know about the way many Germans feel about nature and ecology (see Deutsch Heute, Chapter 7), compose a sales pitch for fruit, natural produce or beauty products for German buyers .

3.5 You have been offered a position as a teacher of English in France/Germany. You have one semester to teach the whole history of the US. Which events will you stress to help your students understand better present-day Americans ? How will you interpret for them these events ?

4. Other Activities

4.1 From X with love. Buy or make a picture postcard of your city or your country which you would like to send to your foreign friend, who has never been to the US. Write a short text to it, telling him/her why you chose that picture.
Or: you are a native French/German. Find a picture you would like to send your friend in the US, and tell him/her why you chose that picture.
Students exchange picture postcards and have to answer in the role of the addressee, knowing what they know about each other.

4.2 Behind the looking-glass. Using slides and brochures provided by the Foreign Office of the foreign country, construe what image the foreign country likes to give of itself and what it doesn't show. What does it tell us about the values of the people who made the cultural material ? What would you like them to show, which they didn't ? Write a short dialogue between you and the authors.
Or write the cultural attache of the country .
Or: write a short brochure about the US for foreign students learning English in their country.

In groups of three, prepare a short TV presentation of your city/ country for the foreign TV viewers, i.e., for export. Take into account what you know about their constructs of the US !

4.3 Reviews . Divide the class into authors and foreign reviewers. The authors write an essay on "The American's America" for the foreign readers. The foreign reviewers have to review and edit these essays for the foreign press, taking a foreigner's viewpoint of America.

4.4 Once-upon-a-time. Experimenting with different outlooks on events. Find and read modern variants of old fairy-tales (e.g., West-German socialist variants or East-German political variants of Grimm fairy-tales). Students write a whole fairy-tale or the end of a well-known fairy-tale, giving it a psychological, social, moral, religious or political meaning. Example: "Was ist aus Schneewittchen und ihrem Prinzen in Amerika geworden ?"

4.5 Constructing a cultural context. Students are given a conversation between two native speakers or a short story to read. In both texts, the outcome has been omitted. Write an ending which is consistent with what you know about the characters or the conversational partners and the cultural context in which the event takes place. Compare your ending with the authentic ending and discuss the differences. How does your ending reflect <u>your own</u> attitudes and values ? How does it reflect your understanding of the attitudes and values of the persons involved ?